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Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Acting Secretary
Program

Letter No. 2702

February 24, 1995

RECORD EXPORTS FOR FY 95 -- U.S. agricultural exports are expected to reach a record \$48.5 billion in fiscal year 1995. Agricultural export value is projected to increase \$5 billion from the \$43.5 billion estimated for fiscal year 1994. Export volume is forecast to increase 29 million metric tons to 156.6 million. Exports are expected to be bolstered by expanding foreign demand for U.S. bulk commodities, as well as meats, fruits, vegetables and other high-value consumer foods. Acting Secretary of Agriculture Richard Rominger said, "The rising export numbers directly translate into new jobs and greater opportunities for producers and rural communities in virtually every state and region of the country."

COMMITMENT TO PACA -- The Clinton administration is reaffirming its commitment to the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA). Acting Secretary of Agriculture Richard Rominger said, "While the U.S. Department of Agriculture recognizes that areas of PACA could be improved, the administration will vigorously oppose any legislative effort to eliminate this critically important act. Without the protections the PACA affords, our nation's fruit and vegetable industry would lose millions of dollars each year from unfair trade practices." The PACA remedies delinquent payment problems between the various commercial links from field to retail counters. Rominger stated that in its current form, the PACA is economical, self-supporting through license fees and saves the industry millions of dollars in litigation costs. **Contact: Jerry Redding (202) 720-6959.**

JOINT COMMISSION ON GRAINS -- The Canada-U.S. Joint Commission on Grains (JCG) held its fourth meeting in Vancouver from February 9 to 11. Focusing on the work of its subcommittees, members looked into transportation quality and grading. A discussion on the examination of domestic and export programs in Canada and the U.S. was continued from their last meeting. Among the other issues debated were the differences in grain grading standards in the two countries, end-use certificates, and the differences in handling, storage, and transportation activities. Members also looked at the Export Enhancement Program, the Canadian Wheat Board, and the domestic support programs in both countries. The next meeting of the Commission will take place in New Orleans. **Contact: Wayne Baggett (202) 720-2032.**

DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS FOR RICE -- Nearly \$575 million will be paid to eligible rice producers in the form of deficiency payments for the 1994 crop of rice. The total payment rate is based on the difference between the established target price and the higher of the national average loan rate for the crop, or a selected market price. The national average loan rate is \$6.50. The national average market prices received are \$6.65 per hundredweight for the August through December, 1994 period and \$7.98 per hundredweight for the 1994 calendar year. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

BEEFED UP RESULTS -- USDA's Cattle on Feed Evaluation (COFE) shows the beef industry is taking an active role in changing management practices to assure the quality and safety of their products. In this initial portion of the COFE evaluation, small and large capacity feedlot producers responded to a USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's survey about the management and health of their cattle. The evaluation showed that beef producers have responded to increased concerns about food safety, product quality and the environment by improving management practices through voluntary quality assurance and environmental monitoring programs. **Contact: Kendra Pratt (301) 734-6573.**

1995 NATIONAL SWINE STUDY -- Beginning in June, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service will launch a national swine study for 1995. The survey will focus on the priority animal health and management information needs of the pork industry. The objectives of this Swine '95: Grower/Finisher study are to provide information on the production and health levels of the U.S. population of swine herds and assess how this information affects export markets and disease control programs. **Contact: Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898.**

TURN YOUR YELLOW PAGES GREEN -- Phone books, newspapers and other waste papers can be recycled into pellets that work as "green manure" and ground cover for various crops. Researchers at USDA's Agricultural Research Service have found that soybeans do as well on soil that have the pellets mixed in as they do on soil mixed with winter wheat crop for green manure. The pellets also save the expense of tearing up the cover crop and could even replace herbicides. Weeds are eradicated by smothering them with the mulch, combining chemical compounds with the paper, or both! Researchers are now working on a way to use longer pellets to hold down highly erodible soil. **Contact: J.H. Edwards, Jr. (205) 844-3979.**

WHAT DO BABY FOOD, BEER AND BIOFUELS HAVE IN COMMON? They could all be produced in a fraction of the time currently required. Starch from corn, barley and other grains is used as a key ingredient in the making of these products. Now, thanks to USDA researchers at the Agricultural Research Service, starch can be broken down up to ten times faster with the use of a natural enzyme. Alpha glucosidase was discovered two years ago, but it may have been used by Egyptians as early as 3500 B.C. to malt barley. Researchers are now working on a way to combine the enzyme for quicker, more efficient commercial production of starch derivatives. **Contact: Cynthia A. Henson (608) 262-0377.**

TASTE BUDS FOOLED -- Trained panelists couldn't tell the difference between chocolates with a whipped cream filling and those with half the cream replaced by an Oatrim gel. Oatrim is a fat substitute developed by USDA scientists using modified oat flour that is high in soluble fiber. When all the cream was replaced with Oatrim in the taste test, only a slight decrease in creamy flavor and texture was detected. **Contact: George E. Inglett (309) 681-6363.**

LET THE SEEDS COME IN! -- True potato seeds from Chile can now enter the United States under certain conditions. USDA announced (February 17) true potato seed can now be imported into the U.S. from Chile's Tenth Region as long as the seed originates from certified U.S. virus-free plants, is produced under the supervision of Chilean plant protection authorities and is tested for seedborne viruses prior to being imported. This ruling will enable U.S. producers to use "true" potato seed - not seed potatoes- to produce potato varieties not currently grown in this country. **Contact: Ed Curlett (301) 734-3256.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1969 -- An in-depth look at China and its potential when it comes to U.S. farm imports is the topic of this week's Agriculture USA with Brenda Curtis. (Weekly cassette -- 13-1/2 minute documentary).

CONSUMER TIME # 1449 -- Gardening angels; food from ethanol; kids and competition; deicers and your lawn; water rights and the National Forest System. (Weekly cassette -- consumer features).

AGRITAPE FEATURES # 1961 -- China's huge expanding market; cattle outlook not bright; dairy barn of the future; an alternate look at tobacco's importance; three-pronged weed control. (Weekly cassette -- news features).

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tuesday, March 7, weekly weather and crop outlook. Thursday, March 9, world ag supply and demand for cotton; crop production for cotton and citrus. Friday, March 10, crop production; world ag supply and demand; cotton and wool outlook. **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newslines carry many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5 p.m., ET, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

ACTUALITIES -- Excerpts from the opening of USDA's Agricultural Outlook Forum include comments from Acting Secretary of Agriculture Richard Rominger, National Economic Council Chair Laura D'Andrea Tyson and USDA Acting Chief Economist Keith Collins. Excerpts from White House news conference on proposal to replace federal nutrition and feeding programs with block grants include comments from USDA Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services Ellen Haas.

FEATURE -- Eric Parsons reports on the 1995 farm program and crop insurance sign-up deadlines.

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:

Thursday, 3:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, Telstar 302, Channel 6 (Transponder 3H), (C-band), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3820 MHz. Monday, 11:00-11:15 a.m. ET, Galaxy 4, Channel 12 (C-band), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3940 MHz.

Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services.

Call Larry A. Quinn, (202) 720-6072; write 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300.


OFF MIKE

PRODUCER ATTITUDES...are good in Wisconsin after a bountiful crop last year, and they are in the mood to consider new farm equipment, reports **Pam Jahnke-Welch** (WTSO, Madison, WI). Pam is off to the Southwest this week to interview farmers in Arizona and New Mexico about the expanding dairy industry there. Wisconsin farmers are interested in this development and how it affects overall market for dairy products. WTSO has just added another 45 minutes to their daily farm news programming which is scheduled from 5 a.m. to 2 p.m. Urban listeners calling in have responded well to this increase in farm news.

SOUTH OF THE BORDER...down Mexico way...went a Texas team of 35 cow-calf producers, feedlot operators, retailers, Texas Beef Council and Texas Department of Agriculture representatives and broadcaster **Lee McCoy** (Texas State Networks, Arlington, TX). The February 7-10 tour was sponsored by the Texas-Mexico Agricultural Alliance for the purpose of improving trade relations. Lee says the Mexican cattlemen were very hospitable during their visits to three progressive ranches where they saw lots of improved pasture and well-managed operations. Lee reports agricultural and market news for Texas State Networks that serve 45 radio stations throughout the state.

WHEAT ON KANSAS PLAINS...is breaking dormancy early due to warmer than usual weather the past few days, according to wheat farmer and broadcaster **John Morris** (KSAL, Salina, KS). John says that Kansas farmers are talking a lot about the Farm Bill with many concerned that farm supports may be eliminated too quickly. With KSAL for six years, John does eight news segments from 5:30-9 a.m. and host a half-hour program at noon.

NEW HOUR TV PROGRAM...on agriculture has been initiated, reports **Jim Adamson** (KSBW-TV, Salinas, CA) who called to verify current satellite coordinates for the weekly USDA Satellite TV Newsfeed. Thanks to stations who are telling us how they use the TV features and actualities.



LARRY A. QUINN, Director
Video, Teleconference and Radio Center



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